



METROPOLITAN
TRANSPORTATION
COMMISSION

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Memorandum

TO: Planning & Operations Committee

DATE: April 13, 2001

FR: Deputy Director, Policy

W.I.: 51.5.10

RE: Regional Transit Expansion Policy and Criteria: Resolution No. 3357

Please find attached for your approval Resolution No. 3357, the proposed final Regional Transit Expansion Policy and Criteria. As presented in draft form last month, this policy is being developed in tandem with the 2001 update of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), as a successor to the existing regional rail agreement, Resolution No. 1876.

This approach is distinct from Resolution No. 1876 in two significant ways:

- It is comprised of both a rail element and an express bus/HOV element; the Bus/HOV elements can be either stand-alone; or transitional corridor investments until rail is viable. MTC's *Transportation Blueprint for the 21st Century* provides a starting point for candidate rail and bus proposals.
- The Regional Transit Expansion Policy will contain a fully funded element that will be incorporated into the financially constrained RTP; and an advocacy element that outlines sequencing for continued investment as funds become available.

Comments Received /Policy Revisions

Resolution No. 3357 has been developed to reflect a number of written and oral comments to the draft policy. In addition to the Commission's Planning and Operations Committee March 9th meeting, where staff received comments from Committee members, the draft policy and criteria were presented to the Partnership Finance and Planning and Operations Committees in February, the Environmental Justice Advisory Group at its April 3rd meeting, and were discussed with several members of the state and federal legislative delegation staffs. As of April 4, 2001, we received written comments from the following:

- Commissioner Scott Haggerty
- Dorothy Dugger, Deputy General-BART

- Pete Cipolla, General Manager-VTA
- Walt Streeter, Deputy General Manager-S.F. Muni
- Bob McCleary, Contra Costa Congestion Management Agency
- Transportation Justice Working Group

The key substantive issues raised in both oral and written comments are outlined below, with responses on how those comments were, or were not, incorporated into the final recommended policy. References are noted for written comments, copies of which are included with your packet.

Issues

1. Treatment of Resolution No. 1876 projects in the Regional Transit Expansion Policy.
The draft policy indicated that prior, uncompleted projects from the original Resolution No. 1876 agreement would receive priority consideration in the Expansion Policy, if other key criteria were met. Commissioner Haggerty requested specific recognition of Resolution No.1876 Tier 2 projects in the policy (see attachment A for Tier 2 list). VTA expressed concerns that carry-over projects not be awarded special a priori status. CCTA indicated that priority status would hinge on satisfaction of other relevant criteria.

Response: The policy has been clarified to indicate that only Tier 1 projects from Resolution No. 1876 would receive priority under this criterion, restated as “Honor Resolution No. 1876 commitments”. Other relevant criteria, however, must be met in order for the carry-over Tier 1 candidates to rank highly under the new process. Since the original Tier 2 list is very extensive, covering a significant share of candidates that will likely be considered under the new policy, staff believes that “Tier 2 status” would not serve as an effective screen to differentiate among projects.

2. Procedures for applying criteria to the selection of specific projects. All commentors raised at least one and sometimes several issues related to the actual application of the rail and bus criteria, including issues of criteria weighting, project ranking, project phasing, and policy amendments. Questions were raised as to the specific measures, qualitative or quantitative, that would be developed and applied, especially for the cost-effectiveness measure.

Response: At this time, we are asking the Commission to approve the body of the proposed criteria as a framework for initiating more detailed discussions at the local level. As policy criteria, we do not anticipate that rigorous, quantitative “scoring” applications would be appropriate. However, we have added clarifications in both the rail and bus policy elements that the criteria are intended to have a cumulative impact—i.e. a project that meets multiple criteria to a significant degree will do better than one which meets fewer criteria to a lesser extent.

As well, once the criteria are approved, some basis for comparison among project

candidates would need to be established. For example, measures of capital and operating funding commitments, and cost-effectiveness would require a level of specificity and consistency to be relevant. We have added specificity under the rail criteria for TEA-21/federal funding; TCRP/state funding; Operations and Maintenance capacity, and cost-effectiveness to reflect this need. Bus criteria for financial capacity have been similarly strengthened.

3. Project Readiness. BART, S.F. Muni and CCTA suggested that project readiness and project timing (i.e. phasing), be considered as criteria elements.

Response: Staff believes that once the policy criteria have identified projects to include in the Regional Transit Expansion Policy, issues of project readiness and phasing would have a bearing on the implementation of projects, not their selection per se. For example, these criteria would first establish what set of projects would receive priority for regional discretionary funds over the 25 year planning period of the RTP; factors like the timing of funding commitments and status of environmental clearance would then dictate in what order those projects would proceed.

4. Operating, Maintenance Capacity/Environmental Justice. CCTA and the Transportation Justice Working Group expressed considerable concern that the criteria address the ability of the project sponsor to adequately operate and maintain the overall system once a rail extension came on line. This was a topic at meetings among other Partnership committee members and stakeholder groups as well. The Transportation Justice Working Group's letter further elaborated the need to ensure that in an effort to sustain a proposed rail extension—specifically the proposed BART to San Jose extension—bus services operated by involved project sponsors that served the needs of transit dependent persons would not be jeopardized.

An additional concern raised by members of the Environmental Justice Advisory Group was the idea that the Regional Transit Expansion Policy and efforts to define a lifeline transit element should not be viewed as discrete actions to develop two separate “classes” of transit.

Response. Staff has added a new rail criterion to specifically address the issues raised: “Operations, maintenance, and rehabilitation capacity.” It includes provisions for ensuring overall financial sustainability of an expanded network, including the need to maintain core system bus services to transit dependent populations. A similar provision has been added to the bus criterion to ensure that express bus service expansions do not negatively impact local services needed by transit dependent persons.

We note specifically that the Commission is engaged in an exercise to identify and analyze a system of core, “lifeline” services for transit dependent persons (the topic of agenda time 5.b). It is our intent that such service, as well as services addressing severely congested corridors, particularly during commute periods, are both

recognized as essential elements of an overall, comprehensive transit network. This intent has been clarified in the policy's introduction.

5. Land use: There has been overall support for the land use criterion (as specifically noted in the BART, CCTA and S.F. Muni letters). However, several partner agencies and Commissioners were concerned that it may be too vague in its connection to ridership.

Response: The rail criterion for land use has been bolstered to address its linkage to ridership and related revenue generating assumptions; and to clarify the need for discrete policy commitments by local jurisdictions where new, denser land use patterns are assumed in support of extensions.

6. System Connectivity. Two legislative staff members noted that an important element of connectivity is the TransLink® universal fare card being developed by the Commission, and its use should be required within an expanded rail program. The Environmental Justice Advisory Group noted that the original rail element draft did not stipulate consistency with the Regional Transit coordination plan, as was required for the bus element. Members also requested clarification of the important need to connect and coordinate rail extensions with local bus services to facilitate origin to destination "transit only" travel.

Response: The rail element "system connectivity" criterion has been modified to require consistency with MTC's Regional Transit Coordination Plan.

Next Steps

The Committee is being asked to approve the Regional Transit Expansion Policy at its April meeting, and recommend full Commission adoption by the end of the month. This timing will be important if the criteria are going to effectively inform development of our long range plan. The policy and criteria would be distributed to potential project sponsors and Congestion Management Agencies for consideration in RTP project selections due to MTC in late May. Initial rail or bus expansion candidates to be included in a new Regional Transit Expansion Policy would be submitted directly to MTC for consideration. A more detailed process for transit expansion project submittals will be developed and distributed to project sponsors with the approved policy.

In addition, we expect the implementation of the new Regional Transit Expansion Policy, including the identification of projects and development of funding packages for them, to be an on-going topic of discussion with this Committee and the Commission's Advisory committees through the duration of the 2001 RTP. A key, parallel element to this effort will be the development of criteria for a "lifeline" transit system that the Commission will define as part of the RTP. Coordination of these two processes will be discussed at the April 13th meeting.

Recommendation:

We ask the Planning and Operations Committee to approve MTC Resolution No. 3357, and forward it to the full Commission for adoption.


Therese W. McMillan

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In order to advance from Tier II to Tier I, a sponsor must fulfill all financial commitments to Tier I projects.

MTC will support local efforts and the allocation of UMTA Section 9 planning funds as appropriate to project sponsors for the further development of the following projects which are not in any priority order:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>
Oakland Airport Connector	BART/Port of Oakland
BART-Warm Springs to San Jose	BART/Santa Clara County
BART from SFO to Santa Clara	BART/San Mateo County
BART from San Jose to Palo Alto	BART/Santa Clara County
Concord/San Ramon Valley Corridor	BART/Contra Costa county
BART to East Antioch	BART
BART to East Livermore	BART
BART to Hilltop (Richmond)	BART
BART from Hilltop to Crockett	BART
Muni Bayshore Corridor	San Francisco
Muni Geary Corridor	San Francisco
Muni North Beach	San Francisco
Muni VanNess Corridor	San Francisco
Muni Metro Extension-6th to 16th St	San Francisco
Muni Metro East LRV Facility	San Francisco
NWP Corridor	Marin/Sonoma Counties
Gilroy Extension	SCCTD
Capitol Corridor	SCCTD
DeAnza Corridor	SCCTD
Evergreen Corridor	SCCTD
Santa Teresa Corridor	SCCTD
Vasona Corridor	SCCTD
Contra Costa Rail Corridors	Contra Costa County
Dumbarton Rail Corridor	JPB
San Pablo Corridor	AC Transit

D. Tier I Projects - See Table 1

Table 1 describes the agreed upon funding in support of the region's committed New Rail Starts and Extension Program.

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Referred by: POC

ABSTRACT

Resolution No. 3357

This resolution sets forth MTC's Regional Transit Expansion Policy and Criteria.

Further discussion of this action is contained in the MTC Executive Director's Memorandum dated April 13, 2001.

Date: April 25, 2001
W.I.: 12110
Referred by: POC

RE: Regional Transit Expansion Policy and Criteria

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
RESOLUTION NO. 3357

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is the regional transportation planning agency for the San Francisco Bay Area pursuant to Government Code Section 66500 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, MTC adopted Resolution No. 1876 in 1988 which set forth a rail transit starts and extension program for the region; and

WHEREAS, significant progress has been made in implementing Resolution No. 1876; and

WHEREAS, a successor to Resolution No. 1876 needs to respond to new challenges for the region, including the need for express/rapid buses as well as rail to address congestion in major corridors throughout the nine-county Bay Area; and

WHEREAS, MTC's long range planning process, including the Regional Transportation Plan and its *Transportation Blueprint for the 21st Century*, provides a framework for comprehensively evaluating the next generation of major regional transit expansion projects; and

WHEREAS, local, regional, state and federal discretionary funds will continue to be required to finance an integrated program of new rail transit starts and extensions; including those funds which are reasonably expected to be available under current conditions, and new funds which need to be secured in the future through advocacy with state and federal legislatures; and

WHEREAS, MTC recognizes that it must coordinate overall regional priorities, based on a sound planning process and consensus among its planning and funding partners, in order to best position the Bay Area to compete for these limited discretionary funding sources; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that MTC adopts a Regional Transit Expansion Policy and Criteria as set forth in Attachment A, attached hereto and incorporated herein as though set forth at length; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that MTC will refer to the provisions of this resolution as the basis for identifying and selecting rail and express/rapid bus projects to include in a future Regional Transit Expansion Program which will include fully funded projects for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Plan, and future projects that will be a basis for advocating for additional capital and operating funds; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that MTC will periodically review and update Attachment A to account for new information and policy refinements as specific projects are identified.

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Sharon J. Brown, Chair

The above resolution was entered into by the
Metropolitan Transportation Commission
at a regular meeting of the Commission held
in Oakland, California, on April 25, 2001.

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Regional Transit Expansion Policy and Criteria

This policy articulates criteria adopted by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) for the development of an interrelated program of rail extension/improvement and express/rapid bus projects that are primarily concerned with:

- improving mobility in the Bay Area's most congested travel corridors; and
- providing additional transit options for commute travel.

A parallel, equally important MTC planning exercise is defining a safety net or "lifeline" network of service for transit-dependent riders. These two elements embody the core regional emphasis areas for transit expansion identified by the Commission, which would augment the large baseline of existing transit services in the goal to achieve a comprehensive system that addresses the diverse travel needs of the Bay Area.

The criteria outlined in Section A will be used to evaluate rail extension/improvement projects for inclusion in the successor program to MTC Resolution No. 1876, which was approved in 1988. The criteria in Attachment B will be used to evaluate new express/rapid bus projects that will operate on the region's high occupancy vehicle lane system and urban arterial corridors. The express/rapid bus criteria expand upon those contained in MTC Resolution No. 3307, which was approved in September 2000 for the specific programming of \$40 million in express bus capital funds made available by the Traffic Congestion Relief Program (AB 2928-statutes of 2000).

Adding to the fact that express/rapid buses will be included in addition to rail projects, this policy is distinct from Resolution No. 1876 in its financial structure. Reflecting federal and state planning requirements, the policy will contain two tiers of funding agreements:

- A fully funded element that will be incorporated into the financially constrained Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), assuming existing revenues over a 25 year period; and
- An advocacy element that outlines project priorities for continued investment as new funds become available.

Assignment of available revenues for expansion transit purposes—bus or rail—must be balanced by other investment needs, including baseline requirements to maintain and sustain the existing system, and "lifeline" services for transit dependent populations.

Rail Extensions and Improvements

The new rail extension/improvement program will be developed in tandem with the 2001 update of the RTP, and those rail projects that are fully funded will be included in its financially constrained element. Actual physical extension, as well as capital improvements that significantly increase service capacity (e.g. increased frequency) are both eligible rail investments envisioned under the policy. The Bay Area Transportation Blueprint for the 21st Century, and its companion Phased Implementation Plan adopted by the Commission in March 2000, will guide which projects are to be considered for evaluation by the attached policy criteria. A map highlighting potential rail candidates identified by the Blueprint is included as Section A- Figure 1. However, this is not an all-inclusive inventory, and variations on these projects or new ones may be considered under these criteria.

As was its predecessor, the new rail extension/improvement program is expected to be a mix of federal, state, regional, and local funding commitments. To focus the region's Washington D.C. advocacy, only a few projects will be selected to pursue full funding grant agreements and appropriations under the federal Section 5309 New Starts discretionary program. Federal Section 5307/5309 formula funds are not recommended to be used to help finance the rail or bus expansion programs. The Regional Transportation Plan's analysis indicates that current formula transit funds are insufficient to finance more than the most urgent transit capital replacement and rehabilitation needs of the region. Therefore, we expect that these formula 5307/5309 funds will continue to be reserved first and foremost for those replacement and rehabilitation purposes.

Express/Rapid Bus

The Commission previously approved Resolution No. 3307 for express bus expansion for the first increment of \$40 million in state Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) capital funds, which will be committed to projects in May 2001. These criteria incorporate the essential elements of Resolution No. 3307, modifying them to recognize the broader planning horizon within which this policy will be implemented. Of particular note, this policy recognizes bus expansion that addresses enhanced service on both freeway/HOV corridors and major urban arterials.

The express/rapid bus program is expected to include both "stand alone" segments as well as transition corridors that will serve as interim improvements in advance of rail development. A map of initial candidate corridors identified in the Blueprint is included as Section B- Figure 1. However, these are not all inclusive, and other candidates may be proposed for consideration under the Regional Transit Expansion Policy. Federal Section 5309 Bus discretionary funds and other state, regional, and local sources will augment the initial \$40 million state TCRP

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investment. Bus projects meeting specific federal criteria are eligible for 5309 New Starts funding. For consideration under this policy, bus candidates must meet New Start related requirements for rail candidates, including state/local match, as outlined in Section A. Fully funded express/rapid bus projects also will be included in the financially constrained element of the 2001 RTP update. Like the rail element, under funded or unfunded bus projects become a platform to advocate for additional supporting revenues.

Ferry Projects

The Commission will coordinate implementation of this policy with the ongoing planning work of the San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority and, pursuant to Government Code Section 66540.20, will consider revisions to this policy to include ferry expansion projects following approval of the Authority's plan by the Legislature.

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Section A: Rail Extension and Improvement Criteria

The following regional criteria will help guide selection of projects for inclusion in the next MTC rail extension and improvement program. A potential rail project does not need to meet all criteria to be considered for inclusion in the rail element of the Regional Transit Expansion Policy. However, limited funding—either available now or anticipated as new revenues—will require priority setting among the many candidates under consideration. Consequently, a project that satisfies multiple criteria to a significant degree will receive higher priority than one that meets fewer criteria to a lesser extent.

Any projects pursuing federal Section 5309 New Starts funds also will be subject to specific Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements outlined in 49 CFR Part 611 - Major Capital Investment Projects, which were substantially revised and reissued in December 2000. While several elements of these federal regulations are referenced in the regional criteria outlined below, the federal requirements also would be individually applied against New Start candidate projects.

1. Honor Resolution No. 1876-Tier 1 projects

Of the six rail extension projects identified in Resolution No. 1876—Tier 1, three have been completed: BART to Dublin (I-580 corridor), BART to Bay Point (Route 4 corridor), Tasman West (Santa Clara Valley sub area). A fourth currently under construction—the BART to SFO extension—is the first priority for federal New Starts funding in the current agreement, and the terms of its full funding grant agreement with the federal government will require continued federal appropriations for the project through at least FY 2006. BART to Warm Springs and the Caltrain downtown extension remain incomplete from the current agreement; rail investment in those corridors will receive priority consideration in the next agreement.

While Resolution No. 1876 contained an extensive list of “Tier 2” projects, for purposes of developing this Regional Transit Expansion Policy, these would be considered on the same basis as other candidates brought forward to compete under these criteria. Several of these Tier 2 projects are the subject of pending corridor studies.

2. TEA 21 Authorization/ Other federal actions

As a part of the overall priority setting envisioned by the Regional Transit Expansion Policy, a specific objective is to identify lead candidates for federal New Starts funding once the BART to SFO full funding grant agreement is complete. Any Bay Area rail projects seeking federal New Starts funds must be specifically authorized in law. Passed by Congress in 1998, TEA 21

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authorized the following six projects beyond those included in the Resolution No. 1876 agreement (using the project descriptions found in the statute):

Final Design and Construction

San Francisco -- Bayshore Corridor
Stockton – Altamont Commuter Rail

Alternatives Analysis/Preliminary Engineering

Fremont – South Bay Corridor
Oakland Airport – BART Connector
San Francisco – Caltrain Extension to Hollister
California – North Bay Commuter Rail

As well, the S.F. Muni Bay Shore Corridor project has initiated the federal New Starts Report process, which evaluates the project against established FTA New Starts criteria and assigns it a ranking. Similar review actions would be applied to any Bay Area projects that advance beyond the New Starts authorization listings above.

3. Traffic Congestion Relief Program/ other state funding

The percentage of capital cost covered by secured funding will be a major factor in determining the viability of project candidates, and is essential in determining those which can move into the “funded” portion of the Regional Transit Expansion Policy, and be included in the RTP. State funds will likely be a key component of any fully funded capital program.

The Resolution No.1876 program received its first down payment of discretionary funds from the California Transportation Commission, which eventually grew to a \$740 million state commitment to the \$4.1 billion total program. In the era of Senate Bill 45 county share-based programming of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds, the best chance for discretionary state funding for many years to come probably was the Traffic Congestion Relief Program advanced by Governor Davis and adopted by the Legislature in July 2000. There are four proposed Bay Area rail extension projects that received significant funding in the program: BART to San Jose (\$760 million), Muni Metro Third Street Light Rail - Central Subway (\$140 million), Caltrain Express (\$127 million), and Northwest Pacific Commuter Rail (\$37 million). The last project also has \$28 million in Proposition 116 funds dedicated to the Marin-Sonoma corridor.

4. Dedicated Local Funding

About 25% of the Resolution No. 1876 program was funded by \$1.1 billion in local sales tax revenue generated in Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties. The need for dedicated local funding—through transportation sales taxes or some other mechanism—is expected to be even more critical under this Regional Transit Expansion Policy. Increased competition for New Starts funding suggests that federal contributions for large project funding agreements would likely not exceed 50%, making significant local contributions essential. Local dedicated funding gives the region a competitive advantage in Sacramento and Washington by allowing us to “over match” discretionary capital funds. This criterion therefore will require at least a 50% state/local combined match for any federal dollars sought on a single project.

5. Operations, Maintenance and Rehabilitation Capacity

As a condition of prioritizing and committing capital funds, it is essential that any rail extension project clearly demonstrate that it can be operated and maintained in the long term. Project sponsors must submit a reasonable financial plan for the following conditions:

- The project has a secure source of funds to operate at planned levels of service, including, if needed, supporting fare policies. Dedicated local sources of funds are expected to be a significant source of operating support, particularly to augment farebox revenues dependent on building future ridership. Anticipated fare box revenues must be linked to realistic assumptions of future ridership. Should ridership levels, and consequently farebox revenues, fail to materialize as assumed, the project sponsor must demonstrate that other local revenue sources are available and can be dedicated to backstop farebox revenue shortfalls. Any assumption of increased ridership levels due to differing land use patterns must be addressed under criterion #6- “Supportive land use policies.”
- When the rail extension is an addition to an existing system, overall system budget projections must be able to demonstrate the ability to sustain and preserve the enhanced network in the short and long-term, including increased operating, maintenance and rehabilitation costs.
- For rail projects operated by a single entity that also provides bus service, the construction and operation of the rail project must not result in the diversion of resources away from core bus services. Where bus service realignment or restructuring is contemplated to better address system connectivity with the new rail extension, the project sponsor must ensure that

core bus services, particularly to Title VI and transit dependent populations, are maintained as needed to address the needs of those populations.

It is expected that the local dedicated funding discussed above will fundamentally contribute to meeting this criterion, as it is virtually the only source available to fund the operating subsidy for the rail extensions once they are built. Given that significant state and federal subsidies for operations are improbable, a viable financial plan demonstrating local support for operations will become a key requirement for any rail extension included in the fundable element of the RTP.

6. Supportive Land Use Policies

One of the key findings of MTC's Blueprint evaluation of numerous proposed transit investments is that rail extensions capture more ridership in the densely settled urban core of the region. Last year, the BART Board of Directors adopted a new system expansion policy that emphasized the need to "maximize ridership by supporting smart, efficient, and desirable growth patterns". Similarly, FTA's criteria for evaluating projects for New Starts funding recently have focused greater attention on transit-supportive land use policies. Considerations of "cost-effectiveness" (see below) will entail assumptions of ridership tied to existing or future employment and residential development within rail extension corridors.

Consequently, any evaluations of cost-effectiveness that rely on increased ridership arising from future land use patterns that differ from ABAG forecasts would require policy commitments in the form of board or council resolutions from the relevant local jurisdictions where such land use changes will occur. These resolutions must include the specific actions needed to effect the desired land uses (e.g. zoning changes, General Plan amendments) and a timeline for implementing those actions. Any allocation or project approval of funds subject to the Commission's discretion, and dedicated to projects stipulated under this policy, will be contingent upon the local jurisdiction's approval of the specified implementing actions. A related consideration for land use policies would be the economic benefits of new development resulting from improved access provided by the rail investment, as well as the extent to which the rail project provides access to affordable housing and jobs.

7. Cost-Effectiveness

The Blueprint for the 21st Century provides a wealth of valuable baseline cost-effectiveness information on potential rail transit projects that will help guide the development of the next regional rail agreement. There are two specific measures that will be applied under this policy. The measure of "cost-effectiveness" used in the Blueprint to ascertain congestion relief via mode shift from autos to transit is "cost per new rider", i.e. the relationship of a project's capital and

operating cost to the number of new transit riders generated in 2020. Both annualized capital and operating costs are included in the calculation. MTC will consider subsequent information related to the “cost per new rider” measure based upon more detailed evaluation by project sponsors performed subsequent to the Blueprint evaluation.

FTA places a heavy emphasis on the cost-effectiveness of projects being considered for federal New Starts funds. FTA's recently approved “Major Capital Investment Projects; Final Rule” requires a different measure of “transportation system user benefits” that attempts to capture mobility benefits both to new and existing transit riders affected by the rail project. This measure will also be applied to projects included in the Regional Transit Expansion Policy, and will be the primary cost-effectiveness measure for candidates that proceed to seek funding from the federal New Starts discretionary program.

8. System Connectivity

The effectiveness of a rail extension project is enhanced by the degree to which it provides added value to the existing transportation network. Consequently, improved system connectivity by way of direct connections to other parts of the rail transit network (e.g. the Caltrain/BART connection in Millbrae provided by the BART to SFO extension) will be considered. “Gap closures” will be especially important for improving inter-county transit travel, as will major extensions into areas of the region with no significant corridor level transit commute options. As well, providing effective connection to local bus systems to enable convenient and efficient transit use for an entire trip is a major objective of system connectivity. Finally, frequency of the proposed expanded rail services will be evaluated, particularly as it contributes to the reliability of connections between systems. To support this and other elements of coordination, rail projects identified in the Regional Transit Expansion Policy must be operated in a manner consistent with the MTC’s Regional Transit Coordination Plan (MTC Resolution No. 3055).

9. System Access

Related but distinct from system connectivity is the quality of convenient access to the rail extension for riders from other modes. This would include pedestrian access, auto access (i.e. parking) and other transit (e.g. bus to rail transfers at key stations) necessary to complete the passenger’s trip. Project candidates will be evaluated on the extent to which proposed alignments and station designs provide for such connections.

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10. Project Readiness

Project readiness will be assessed as to financial, environmental, and other project approval requirements, primarily to determine the project's sequencing for implementation within the multi-year framework of the Regional Transit Expansion Program. Implementation of operational segments or phases of a project will be considered in assessing relative readiness of the project.

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Section B

Regional Express/Rapid Bus Program Criteria

These criteria will determine an overall regional network and specific projects for the Regional Express/Rapid Bus element of the Regional Transit Expansion Policy. They include the core elements of Resolution No. 3307, the commission's Regional Express Bus Guidelines specific to the programming of \$40 million in state capital Traffic Congestion Relief Program funds. They have been modified to reflect a broader application under the Regional Transit Expansion Policy.

Bus services identified under the Regional Transit Expansion policy must demonstrate that they can effectively address congestion relief by providing a clearly attractive alternative (i.e., improved travel time, improved customer convenience, etc.) to Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV). MTC's Transportation Blueprint has identified the following as key congested corridors:

- I-680 (Central Contra Costa/Tri-Valley/Silicon Valley)
- I-80 (Solano Co. to East Bay/ San Francisco)
- SR 92 (San Mateo/Hayward Bridge)
- US 101 (Sonoma/Marin to SF)
- I-880 (Hayward/San Leandro to Silicon Valley)
- SR 84 (Dumbarton Bridge Express)
- Santa Clara Valley Areawide Rapid Bus
- State Route 4 (East Contra Costa to Bay Point BART)
- Peninsula (South/Central San Mateo to Colma BART/Silicon Valley)
- I-580 (San Joaquin County to Dublin/Pleasanton BART)
- Tri-Valley to Silicon Valley
- West Contra Costa to Oakland/Berkeley/SF

Other corridors will be considered if the planning process supports their inclusion, including congested urban arterials. Services can either be an entirely new service, or significantly enhance and improve current services, as long as the project sponsors demonstrate that the express or rapid bus candidates improve mobility by attracting new riders. Express buses (generally intercounty, long haul services operating on freeway/HOV networks), or rapid buses (generally serving urban arterial corridors on dedicated lanes accompanied by supporting traffic preferential techniques that provide competitive time-savings compared to auto travel) can serve origins and destinations directly or provide express connections to rail. These projects may represent "stand alone" corridor improvements, or the initial short to mid-term phase of corridor enhancements preceding rail investments.

Program Goals

The goals of the Regional Express/Rapid Bus program are to:

- Provide an attractive alternative to driving alone by supporting one or more of the following features:
 - reduced travel time;
 - increased convenience by providing amenities for reading, relaxation, office work, etc.;
 - competitive pricing to driving alone;
 - direct or convenient access to origins and destinations, including connections to the region's rail network.
- Target program to provide services in corridors that have been identified in the Blueprint and other similar corridors.
- Provide new or significantly improved corridor level services rather than supplanting existing services.
- Take advantage of existing and planned infrastructure such as the region's HOV network, park-and-ride facilities, rail network and intermodal transfer facilities.
- Generate new transit riders.
- Provide a seamless regional identity for the customer through use of coordinated marketing.
- Provide the customer with easy access to information, schedules, and fare payment.
- Provide transitional express bus services more quickly in corridors where rail service is planned but not deliverable for many years.

Regional Express/Rapid Bus Project Criteria

Specific projects for the bus element of the Regional Transit Expansion Policy must meet the criteria outlined below. While candidate projects do not need to meet all criteria, those that meet several criteria to a significant degree will be prioritized higher than those meeting fewer criteria to a lesser extent.

- Demonstration that the service will result in faster and/or more convenient service to the customer than by traveling in a single-occupancy vehicle.
- Provision of a financial plan documenting capital and operating needs, including identification of operating subsidies, including fares, and innovative approaches to provide operating subsidies, such as partnerships established with the private sector.
- Demonstration of the sponsor's ability to sustain long-term funding of the service. For express or rapid bus services that are additions to an existing base bus service, financial

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capacity must be demonstrated to accommodate the increased operating, maintenance or rehabilitation needs in the short and long-term resulting from the additional service. In particular, the project sponsor must show that core lifeline services for the transit dependent are maintained as needed to address the needs of those populations.

- Demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of the proposed service by indicating the cost per new rider, cost-competitiveness for the passenger, etc.
- Demonstrations that the service is able to relieve congestion by providing peak hour commute service.
- Implementation that supports regional coordination as adopted in the Regional Transit Coordination Plan (MTC Resolution No. 3055).